

Experiencing Jesus in the Community of Faith

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Pastor Guy Gray

If We Could Multiply the Ministry of Jesus

Jesus said that His followers would do greater works than He had done. This amazes us, because Jesus did the greatest works ever in the history of the world! What if Jesus meant “greater in amount”? What if we could multiply the ministry of Jesus? What if the ministry of Jesus was expressed in various ways through hundreds, thousands or millions of His followers in this broken world? That is exactly the point of “the Body of Christ.” Christ is not through working in this world and the primary way He wants to do His work is through His followers, the community of faith in Jesus, also called the Body of Christ. We are to be the hands and feet of Jesus in our world. But not only His hands and His feet but all of the aspects of Christ, made tangible for the world. That’s the plan, even while we remain imperfect people, much like the Corinthians. God fully intends to work through imperfect people who are learning to yield to the Lordship of Christ in their lives.

Christ’s Spirit in Each and Every Christian

It is God who came up with this amazing plan! This isn’t something that we could ever do by our own ingenuity or effort. The miracle of the Christian life is that God sends His Holy Spirit into the life of every Christian (12:12-13). We are each baptized by the Spirit of God into the Body of Christ. This happens when each of us puts our faith in Christ, surrendering our life to Him as Lord (see Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 10:9-10; John 3:3-8). Experiencing Jesus in the Body of Christ begins with our faith in Jesus. This includes our faith that Jesus is very present in the gathering of and life of the Christian Community. This means that anytime you are together with other Christians, Jesus is with us in a special way. This is amazing and it is wonderful! Do you believe it?

This implies something really important. This means that every Christian has something truly important to offer to other Christians. It also means that every Christian, including you, truly needs something that only other Christians can offer your life. It means we actually need each other in the most profound way. Evidently some Christians at Corinth thought they weren’t very important in the Body of Christ, while others thought they were the superstars of the faith. Others thought that they could “go it alone” and get along just fine without real Christian Community. Paul wants them to adopt a different perspective—to begin to truly value the Body of Christ and to become active in ministry one to another.

Making the Connections that Matter Most

Our tendency, much like the Corinthians, is to live the Christian life as an individual experience without a deep or meaningful connection to the Body of Christ. It’s just “easier” that way. We get hurt, disappointed or disgruntled and we withdraw from fellowship. We think we don’t have anything to offer or we think that other Christians don’t really have that much to offer us. Christian individualism always falls short. The reason why is obvious—Jesus Christ is present in a special way in the “many members” of the body, each with their own special gifts of Christ’s Spirit.

For this reason, I’m asking you to work hard to make the connections that matter most as a Christian. That means making meaningful connections with other Christians. We each need to do this in several different ways. For one thing, you need to connect in a small group or a ministry group. This is the single best way for you to find and use the Spiritual Gifts that God wants to express through your life. In a large worship gathering, it’s just not possible for everyone to express their Spiritual Gifts. The smaller group setting, where people get to know and trust one another is the best setting to

experience the fullness of Jesus in the Body of Christ. There is another dimension to this. You need to connect with Christians who are attempting to do something meaningful together in this world for Jesus. That's the setting where with all sorts of different gifts we begin to work together as a team to accomplish the works of Jesus in our world. I am asking you to seek this out! Be proactive. Take a step of faith! As we will see in chapter 13—there is a “most excellent” way to find and use the Gifts of the Spirit in your life—the way of Love. If you make it your aim to look around you at your brothers and sisters in Christ and connect with them and care for them, you will suddenly find the Spirit of God working in marvelous ways through your life. This is the connection that matters most. When we begin to make this kind of connection in the Body of Christ we are going to see the ministry of Jesus multiply through us in this hurting world. May the Lord help us!

Questions for Discussion & Reflection

This week, read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31.

Spend some time reflecting on the passage. How is the Lord speaking to you?

Can you think of a time when you felt unneeded or insignificant in the body of Christ? How did you respond? Were you tempted to disconnect or move on?

In verse 22, Paul says “those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable”. Why do you think this is true? What is the Lord asking you to do in order to use your indispensable gifts more effectively at River West?

Coming Up:

Wednesday, March 5th, Parent Prayer Group, 7:00-8:00 @ RWLG

Come and join other parents of Jr. High or High School students to pray for our students and the Student Ministries leaders. For more information contact Cynthia Weston @ 515-1464 or cwweston@juno.com

Thursday, March 13th—One Night Only 7:00-8:30pm Foundations: Understanding Islam @ RWLG

Another great evening with Dr. Gerry Breshears as he walks us through the basics of Islam and how the Islam view of God conflicts with the Christian view of God.

Take Note: No Foundations March 20th & 27th

Friday, March 14th—Parent Date Night, 6:00-9:00pm @ RWLG Fellowship Hall

We watch your kiddos and YOU go out and enjoy a Friday night! Space is limited. Contact Anne to sign-up 699.2226 or anne@riverwest.org

Saturday, March 15th—Who's Coming to Dinner?

It's all about connections...and of course food! Spend an evening getting to know other River West folks by sharing a meal at your house or theirs. Sign-ups at church! For more information contact Pastor Adam at 699.2226 or adam@riverwest.org

Friday, March 21st— Good Friday

Good Friday is always an awesome opportunity to come remember the sacrifice the Lord made on the cross and the redemption that we find through that. Plan to join us for this amazing time as we come before Jesus in remembrance of this remarkable act of love.

Sunday, March 23rd—Easter Services, 9:00 & 11:00am @ Lakeridge High School Performing Arts Center

Experience the passion, the power & the life changing presence of the risen Christ. For more information, contact Pastor Adam McMurray @ 699.2226 or adam@riverwest.org